1: Lowie E-5 (1926) 1939 NT20 Washo NT20

881 appeared at the site. Then several small boys were taken into the ring, some of
535 the girls having several times called out in English, "Join in!" I was struck
574 with the amount of English spoken by Indians in conversing with one another,
[177] not only by those of school age, but even by young men of possibly twenty-five to thirty years.

Suddenly, several men entered the ring, which henceforth was apparently enlarged after every intermission. The men were all together in one half of the circle. In the darkness I could not make out precisely how the dancers were holding one another. It seemed that between the first man and the last woman in the ring a slight gap was left so that they never held each other. During these dances the girl with the pole held it aloft—not as in the first dance witnessed—so that it rose something like ten feet above the ground. The step remained uniform—a slow clockwise walk breaking into a lively movement as the dancers warmed up. The women continued to leap; the men rarely jumped, at least did not do it so regularly, rather substituting two quick leftward steps.

At one stage of the performance, a woman appeared within the circle, holding up both hands and approaching the ring of dancers, some of whom seemed to snatch what she was holding in her hands. At one time I also noticed the girl with the pole dancing inside the circle with her companion.

[291] All the dancers were dressed in trade clothes. There was no musical instru-
[439] ment. The dance was to last all through the night, with an intermission for
[534] a feast. Not perceiving any new features, I left before midnight.
[114]

MARRIAGE

583 About a year or two after her puberty dance a girl would get married. One
account makes the suitor ask her father's permission with an offer of buckskin,
● 584 shell beads, and other gifts. If the parents liked him, they called him to marry their daughter. According to Bill, the families of the prospective bridegroom and bride exchanged gifts, the boy's father bringing dried venison to the household of the bride, whose mother gave mush in return. The giving of presents to the bride's parents is called kumyu'ga, the return gift umlagu"wa'a. This exchange continued for several months. Sometimes a youth and a girl met at a dance and came to live together without parental arrangements. The informant, at first noncommittal about his preference, added: "Catching himself is the wrong way, it looks to me. The parents' giving grub to each other is a pretty good way."

591 Normally, the young couple settled with the bride's family, the bridegroom killing game for his parents-in-law, who wanted to keep their daughter and therefore had the husband stay with them, too. This arrangement lasted dur-
[768] ing the old people's lifetime. When they died, their house was burnt and the young couple moved. Bill described residence as matrilocal *or* patrilocal, but some of his own statements indicate a preference for the former. Jack's reminiscences support this view. When small, he lived with his parents, his maternal grandparents, and some of his mother's brothers. Oddly enough, he said

[P. 379, A]

881 The ritual for boys is less important than that for girls.

881 The emphasis for a boy is on his developing ability as a hunter. Although hunting is far less important
868 today than it was even in the recent past, few Washo
224 go through the winter without depending on rabbit or
[178] deer for meat. The pursuit of the squirrel, ground squirrel, gopher, and other small game appears to be minimal, but certainly this food is not spurned, if
[648] available. One of the common legal conflicts with the white man stems from out-of-season hunting during the winter by Washo men filling out the family larder.

Young boys were encouraged to hunt with bow and arrow as soon as they could. Quite often such training was carried out by an older male relative—a grandfather or an old uncle. Expeditions of old men and young boys after chipmunk and squirrel appear to have been common, freeing able-bodied men for major hunting while the experienced, but less able, older men instructed the boys.

881 However, all the game taken by a boy was taboo to
224 his immediate family. This included young deer and
262 does which he might kill. Such game was given to another family, usually related. The boy was also for-
[226] bidden to eat his own take. The taboo included any fish the boy caught.

When a boy killed a buck deer considered by his father or other male relative to be big enough, he went through a simple ceremony. One informant said that in the old days a boy was required to crawl under the antlers of his kill. His father or older male relative then gave him a bath, and from that time he was considered a man and the taboo on his kill was lifted from himself and his family.

[115] My informant, a mother of four sons now over forty, stated that all her sons had gone through the taboo period and were bathed by their father when they killed their first big buck. Until very recently she received meat from some relatives with a young son who hunted frequently.

[178] Whether or not the young Washo are still observing this taboo and ritual I was unable to determine. However, in certain conservative families it seems probable that at least minimal ritual is observed.

MARRIAGE
(2018-2051)

585 Marriage is entirely a social institution, and no
[771] religious elements appear to have entered into it. Traditionally the ceremony, if there was any at all, consisted of a "chief" (respected man) throwing a blanket over the shoulders of a couple at a dance.
584 Ceremonial gatherings, such as the pine-nut dances
796 and the girls' dances were important in the selection of marriage partners, inasmuch as boys and girls came together at these gatherings to engage in flirtation, affairs, and courtship. Dreamers at the "big
[791] times" are reported by informants to have exhorted
[581] married couples to be good to each other and not fight (see also Lowie 1939, p. 303).

DEATH
(2389-2453)

764 No amount of social dislocation or cultural impact alters the constant fact of death. Each generation faces

involved in gift and ceremonial exchange was culturally defined in specific ways and had more of a ritual quality than familial sharing. The transfer of goods between households in setting up a marriage involved a formal sequence of gift and counter-gift that might go on for over a year. It involved a stronger demand for reciprocity than familial sharing and in some cases had the characteristics of trade. The negotiation, however, was implicit and not directly verbalized as it is in trade.

Gift and ceremonial exchange is, in economic terms an "exchange" while familial sharing and task group sharing are not. There tended to be a time lapse between the giving of a gift and a return gift. The gift was usually accepted without question of its value. Social status was a primary factor in gift and ceremonial exchange.

It was in connection with the life cycle events of birth, puberty, marriage, and death that gift and ceremonial exchange became customary and highly integrated with social ritual. Birth and puberty were also occasions for fasting and exercise of food taboos. These are two customs that should be included in any analysis of food distribution. The taboo on meat and salt occurred at these times and at every menstruation while salt was never considered good for children.

Childbirth among the Washo was a long and arduous affair involving fasting for both parents and extensive gift giving. A midwife prepared a bed with woven sagebrush bark mat over warm sand. If the child was in a poor position for delivery the midwife manipulated the child within the mother. As the delivery was being effected usually one or two women came in to help. A buckskin belt was tied around the mother above the child and the belt was worked down by pressure in rhythm with the birth movements. As the child was being born the midwife recited a short exhortation to the child: "Hurry up and come out so I can see you."

The umbilical cord was cut by the midwife about four inches from the child's abdomen and then tied with string or sinew one inch from the child's abdomen. Following this was the washing of the baby, the careful burial of the afterbirth, and intricate care of the mother. The mother was given the sap of the sugarpine dissolved in warm water and massaged with a greasy salve. The mother abstained from eating meat, fat, or salt for a period of a month after the child was born. She could not eat anything but a thin pine-nut soup, and she could not be washed until the umbilical cord fell from the child, a period of about four days. At the end of her period in bed, usually nine or ten days, the mother bathed, painted herself, and gave away her old clothes.

The baby was wrapped in furs and placed on a sagebrush bark mat in a temporary cradle. A new temporary cradle was used after each bath.

horns were placed on the ground leaving a space between the ground and the arc of the horns. The boy then attempted to crawl under the horns. If the horns were large so that he was successful in crawling under them, he would have good luck as a hunter. If he knocked the horns over his luck would be bad. Then he was given a bath and a prayer for good hunting and good health by one of his parents, probably his father in aboriginal times. The animal the boy had killed was not eaten by the boy or his family, but was given away.

Gift and ceremonial exchange became a delicate and subtle social art in courtship and marriage relations. Almost all marriages among young people were arranged by the parents. The young adults of fourteen or fifteen were shy toward age-mates of the opposite sex so they were rather urged into a courtship that would last for about a year by their parents. This courtship could be initiated in several ways.

After the parents had looked the prospects over, they would take a gift to the parents of the young person they had chosen as a spouse for their child. The gift was usually food. There would be polite conversation, usually about matters unrelated to the young people concerned. Then if the gift was accepted, by taking it in their hands and using it or placing it with their other things within the house, a form of engagement was established between their children. This would be followed by a reciprocal gift.

If the gift was left untouched, it would be taken back by the would-be givers and no engagement was established. An intermediate position between engagement and no engagement could be established by accepting the gift and not returning one. Lowie (1939, 308) wrote "The giving of presents to the bride's parents is called kumyu'ga, the return gift umlagu''wa'a. This exchange continued for several months."

If the parents were already good friends the marriage of the children may have been planned for years. Another way was to work through the children by having them meet in one way or another and having them send gifts to the other's parents.

The marriage came after about a year of courtship when the parents agreed to let their children actually reside together. One informant mentioned the custom of having the two dance side by side at a puberty ceremony dance (te?we?we?) or a purely social dance (seshishi) and putting a single rabbit skin blanket over the shoulders of both of them.

According to the author's informants, the newly married couple never moved out and established a residence apart from their relatives. They moved into

dance gave a reason for its omission, such as her attendance at a government boarding-school. In general, the ceremony is scrupulously observed. The modern ceremony is a modified version of the old one. The girl no longer climbs a mountain; she climbs a small hill. An automobile is waiting for her when she returns; she wears her slip when she is being bathed instead of being naked as was formerly the custom; she abstains from meat for only two weeks instead of a month; the second dance is usually omitted. Yet the essentials of the ceremony are maintained; and this is in the face of the teasing to which the Indian girl is exposed from her white schoolmates, for the public puberty ceremony makes her a conspicuous social object at the time of her first menses.

Marriages were celebrated with a minimum of ceremony. The most desirable Washo marriage was one arranged by the parents of the bride and groom. Such a marriage was preceded by an exchange of presents. To refuse a present was to reject the prospective bride or groom. Following the exchange of gifts, the new couple began to live together without further ceremony (Curtis, 1926, p. 97; Lowie, 1939, p. 308). The exchange of presents was optional, and occasionally a boy and girl would live together without the benefit of parental arrangements (Barrett, 1917, p. 9; Lowie, 1939, p. 308). Perhaps arranged marriages were never very frequent or else the custom began to die out very early, for in my interviews I found only two arranged marriages out of a total of forty-eight. Today, most people marry in the "tribal" manner, that is, they just begin to live together. Even those few who have purchased marriage licenses usually neglect to go to a justice of peace to complete the ceremony officially.

Curtis (1926, p. 97) says that the dead were formerly cremated. Lowie (1939, p. 310) and Barrett (1917, p. 9) confirm this but add that, by the time they studied the Washo, burial had replaced cremation. Following cremation, the Washo collected the bones of the dead person and placed them in a creek. The clothes and personal property of the deceased person were burned or hidden and the house he used was abandoned. The old men and women cut their hair and mourned for three months (Lowie, 1939, p. 310).

Modern funerals retain many Indian practices. Chief among them are the customs intended to make sure that the ghost of the dead person does not return to trouble the living. Before the body is lowered into the grave, an old man steps forward and makes a speech instructing the ghost to stay away. All of the dead person's property that can be buried is interred with him. Personal property must be destroyed, for this is the "road" by which the ghost of the dead can return and trouble the living.

RELIGION AND CURING

The shaman was the principal religious figure. He possessed supernatural power (wegeléyu) which he received in dreams and which he learned to control during an apprenticeship of several years under an experienced shaman. A shaman could use his power either to cure sickness or to kill. Supernatural power could come from the deer, rattlesnake, "water-baby" (a small, white, manlike creature which lived in streams, springs, and lakes), bear, and eagle. The Washo call both the sources of power and the power itself wegeléyu.

Prior to this ceremony any fish or game that the boy killed was given to others outside his family. When he passed this ceremony he could then eat his own kill and share it with his family; he was then considered a man and could have a wife and family of his own.

The ceremony was initiated by his shooting a large male deer or antelope. After the animal had been skinned, the tips of the horns were placed on the ground, leaving a space between the ground and the arc of the horns. The boy then attempted to crawl under the horns moving toward the eyes and nose of the deer. If the horns of the animal he shot were large enough for him to crawl under, he would have good luck as a hunter. If he knocked the horns over his luck would be bad. He would then have trouble in following the track of the deer.

Following this act he was given a bath and a prayer for good hunting and health by either his father or mother. The animal that the boy had killed was not eaten by the boy or his family, but was given away. My informants said that not all boys went through this ceremony, and that in some instances it was the father that actually shot the buck.

Marriage

Almost all marriages among young people were arranged by the parents. The young adults of 14 or 15 were shy toward those of the same age and opposite sex so they were rather pushed into a courtship that would last for about a year. This courtship could be initiated in several ways.

After the parents had looked the prospects over, they might take a gift to the parents of the young person they had chosen as a spouse for their child. The gift was usually food. There would be polite conversation, usually about matters unrelated to the young people concerned. Then if the gift was accepted, by the recipient parents' taking it in their hands and using it or placing it with their other things within the house, a form of engagement was established between the children. This would be followed by a reciprocal gift, usually at the same visit. If the gift was left untouched, it would be taken back by the would-be givers and there was no engagement.

The fall festival (gumsabáy?) just prior to pinenut picking was a time when many engagements and marriages were contracted. For young people, the engagement usually lasted a year and was often contracted at one festival and the marriage finalized at the festival of the next year. During the year of engagement the courtship was watched carefully by the parents so that it

584 did not become too intimate. Hank Pete said "If this man maybe wants to give a gift to his girl friend, he doesn't look at her. She is in there where she can't see him. He visits, but they don't let them talk while they are exchanging gifts. She sits just inside to the right."

Bertha Holbrook said "My husband asked my mother's brother and he said it was a good thing. He used to give my folks money. They were poor. I never spoke to Mike before I married him." Clara Frank said the engagement was very strict and that no one but the parents said anything.

585 Marriage occurred when the parents agreed to let their children actually reside together. Bertha Holbrook mentioned the custom of having the two dance side by side and putting a single rabbitskin robe over the shoulders of both of them.

591 The newly married couple never moved out and established a residence apart from their relatives. They moved into the house of either parent. It was more common for them to move in with the wife's parents, but they often moved later to the husband's parents' place. The marriage sometimes resulted in both sets of parents' living in the same or adjacent houses. In rare cases, if both of the parents' houses were unsuitable to the couple, they would move in with another relative. When the couple had a few children of their own they might then set up a household separate from their parents.

58 Engagement, courtship, and other formalities were reduced for marriages that took place later in life. Divorce occurred when economic cooperation, common residence, and exclusive sexual rights no longer prevailed. If
586 children were involved in a divorce they were divided according to the ability
[593] of each parent to support them or they were raised by other relatives. Usually there was a strong emotional attachment between a man and wife, in addition to factors of economic and sexual dependence, so that divorce is said to have been rare.

595 If a wife had younger sisters they frequently became her husband's wives as well, although the practice was not mandatory. It was the most common form of polygyny, but some men had two or more wives who were not sisters. Hank Pete claims that his grandfather had from three to five wives at various times during his life.

The author knows of only two cases of polyandry and both of these involve a woman's marrying two brothers. Hank Pete said "A woman married two brothers about 65 or 70 years ago. They got along fine. She rustled food for both of them. She had one girl and two boys by one man and no children by the other. They didn't live together. They had two gális dánal ('winter houses')